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OUTGOING
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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN BRIEF OCPAS-EUR 89-083 FOR 11 APRIL 1989.

FROM: DDI/O/CPAS.

CONTENTS

1. USSR: GEORGIA SIMMERING

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE ☐ DATE:
29-Mar-2010

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MESSAGE

1. USSR: GEORGIA SIMMERING [REDACTED]

ALTHOUGH TANKS AND ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS HAVE IMPOSED AN UNEASY CALM ON TBILISI, SPORADIC RALLIES CONTINUE IN THE CAPITAL AND SEVERAL OTHER CITIES IN THE REPUBLIC. [REDACTED]

TROOPS YESTERDAY MORNING BROKE UP A RALLY OF SEVERAL THOUSAND STUDENTS CALLING ON THE UN TO EXAMINE THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA, ACCORDING TO WESTERN PRESS REPORTS. SHOTS REPORTEDLY WERE FIRED; THERE ARE NO RELIABLE REPORTS OF CASUALTIES. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TROOPS FIRED ON A CROWD, WOUNDING 40, AFTER MOLOTOV COCKTAILS WERE THROWN AT TANKS. THE SOVIET MEDIA SAY STUDENT-LED DISTURBANCES CONTINUED YESTERDAY AT KUTASI, SUKHUMI, AND BATUMI. [REDACTED] FOREIGN TOURISTS AND JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN BANNED FROM TBILISI, ALTHOUGH THOSE THERE ON LONG-TERM VISITS APPARENTLY REMAIN. [REDACTED]

THE DEATH TOLL FROM SUNDAY MAY BE HIGHER THAN THE OFFICIAL 18; WESTERN JOURNALISTS REPORT 22 BODIES HAD BEEN COUNTED, AND A LIST OF 30 DEAD HAS BEEN POSTED AT THE TBILISI CATHEDRAL. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE LEADER OF TWO OF THE THREE MAJOR GEORGIAN NATIONALIST GROUPS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, BUT MANY ENTERPRISES SEEM TO BE STILL ON STRIKE. THE NATIONALISTS HAD AFFIRMED, BEFORE SUNDAY'S CLASHES, THEIR INTENT TO CONTINUE PROTESTS UNTIL FRIDAY, THE ANNIVERSARY OF MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN 1978 OVER LANGUAGE POLICY. [REDACTED]

FOREIGN MINISTER SHEVARDNADZE, A FORMER PARTY CHIEF OF GEORGIA, WILL SKIP THE WARSAW PACT FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING AND A GET-TOGETHER WITH EAST GERMAN LEADER HONECKER THIS WEEK, YESTERDAY. HE AND JUNIOR PARTY SECRETARY RAZUMOVSKIY FLEW TO GEORGIA. [REDACTED]

COMMENT: THE SIZABLE MILITARY DEPLOYMENT AND THE VISIT OF SHEVARDNADZE AND RAZUMOVSKIY SUGGEST SOVIET LEADERS ARE DETERMINED NOT TO LET UNREST DRAG ON AS IT DID IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN. MOSCOW PROBABLY HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE GEORGIAN LEADERSHIP, WHICH IS NOT AS NATIONALISTIC AS ITS ARMENIAN COUNTERPART. MOSCOW'S RESPONSE IN GEORGIA WILL SHOW POLITICAL ELITES IN THE BALTIC REPUBLICS AND IN THE UKRAINE THAT POLICY HAS TOUGHENED. GEORGIAN NATIONALISTS ARE LIKELY TO PERSIST, EVEN THOUGH THE MILITARY PRESENCE IN TBILISI WILL MAKE PROTESTS HARD TO ORGANIZE. ALTHOUGH FURTHER DEMANDS FOR SECESSION BY ABKHAZIAN MIGHT SPARK DEMONSTRATIONS OR VIOLENCE ELSEWHERE IN THE REPUBLIC, GEORGIANS IN TBILISI ARE LIKELY TO WAIT FOR 14 APRIL. [REDACTED]

NEW DECREE STIFFENS LAWS AGAINST ALLEGED ANTI-SOVIET ACTIVITIES

THE DECREE AMENDING THE LAW ON STATE CRIMES PASSED ON SATURDAY BY THE SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDUM APPEARS AIMED AT INCREASING RATHER THAN RESTRICTING CONTROLS AND IS A BLOW TO REFORMERS. ALTHOUGH SOVIET OFFICIALS INDICATED EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT A NEW LAW WOULD BE

OUTGOING
MESSAGE

OUTGOING
MESSAGE

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OUTGOING
MESSAGE

[REDACTED]

EMERGING, THE PRECISE TIMING OF THE PRESIDIUM ACTION WAS UNDOUBTEDLY RELATED TO THE OUTBREAK OF NATIONALIST UNREST IN GEORGIA. THE CHANGES STRENGTHEN EXISTING PROHIBITIONS AGAINST AROUSING INTERETHNIC OR RACIAL HOSTILITY AND AGAINST PARTICIPATING IN ANTI-SOVIET AGITATION, SLANDER, OR PROPAGANDA. [REDACTED]

THE AMENDED LAW INCREASES THE REGIME'S FLEXIBILITY TO IMPOSE VARIED PENALTIES FOR CRIMES INVOLVING ETHNIC STRIFE AND IMPOSES STRICTER PUNISHMENT WHEN SUCH ACTIONS ARE COMBINED WITH VIOLENCE OR THREATS. ACTIONS COMMITTED BY A GROUP OR ENDING IN LOSS OF LIFE CARRY UP TO 10 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT. [REDACTED]

THE AMENDMENTS ALSO MAINTAIN THE STATE'S SWEEPING POWER TO SILENCE DISSIDENTS, WHISTLE-BLOWERS, AND INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS. RATHER THAN ACCEPTING PROPOSALS TO LIBERALIZE CRIMINAL LAW AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, THE REGIME HAS TIGHTENED LIMITS:

X--BROAD RESTRICTIONS AGAINST ANTI-SOVIET AGITATION CONTINUE. ANY PUBLIC APPEAL FOR UNDERMINING OR OVERTHROWING THE SOVIET STATE AND SOCIAL SYSTEM IS PUNISHABLE BY IMPRISONMENT UP TO THREE YEARS OR FINES UP TO 2,000 RUBLES.

X--SUCH ACTIVITIES, IF COMMITTED BY AN ORGANIZED GROUP OR BY USING COPYING MACHINES, CARRY PRISON TERMS OF AS LONG AS SEVEN YEARS OR FINES UP TO 5,000 RUBLES. IN A NEW TWIST, ACTIONS COMMITTED ON THE INSTRUCTION OF FOREIGN GROUPS ARE PUNISHABLE BY IMPRISONMENT OF THREE TO 10 YEARS.

X--ANTI-SOVIET SLANDER IS STILL ILLEGAL, DESPITE EARLIER PROMISES TO ELIMINATE OR RESTRICT THIS PROVISION TO FURTHER GLASNOST. THE LAW SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS PUBLIC INSULTS OR DISCREDITING OF GOVERNMENT BODIES OR OFFICIALS. THE NEW PROVISIONS APPARENTLY NO LONGER REQUIRE THAT INTENT TO DISCREDIT THE STATE BE PRESENT OR THAT THE INFORMATION BE FALSE. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

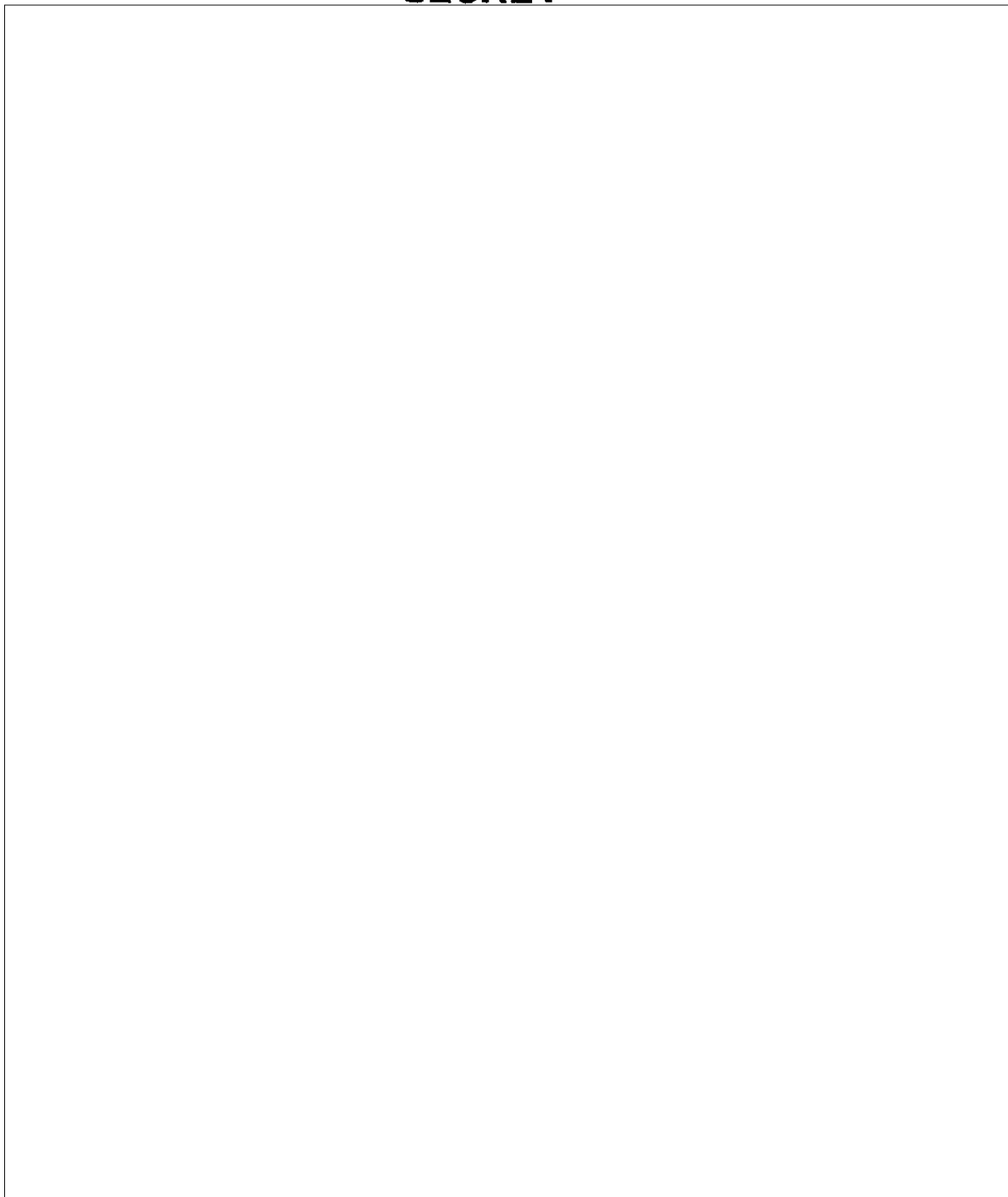
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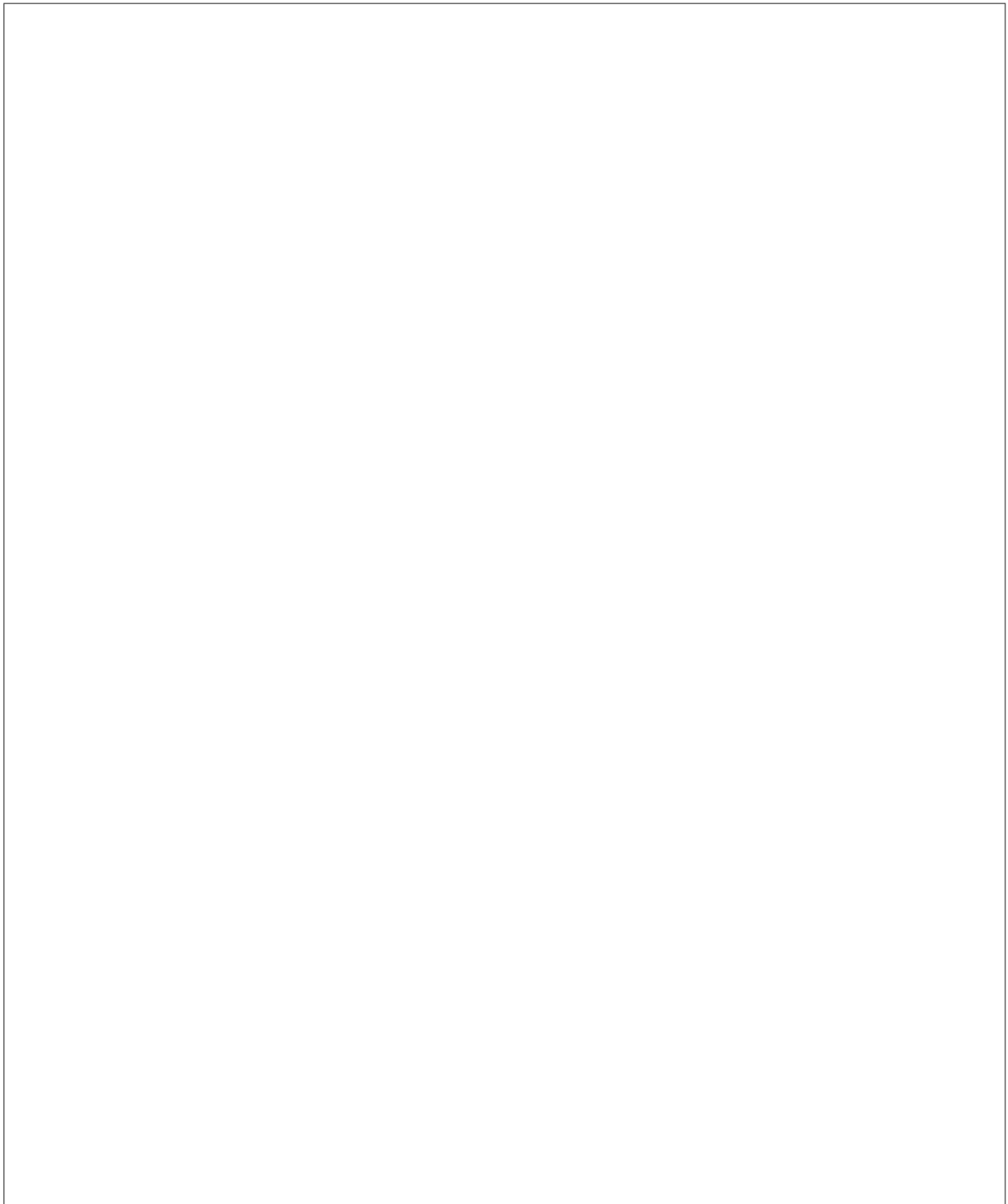
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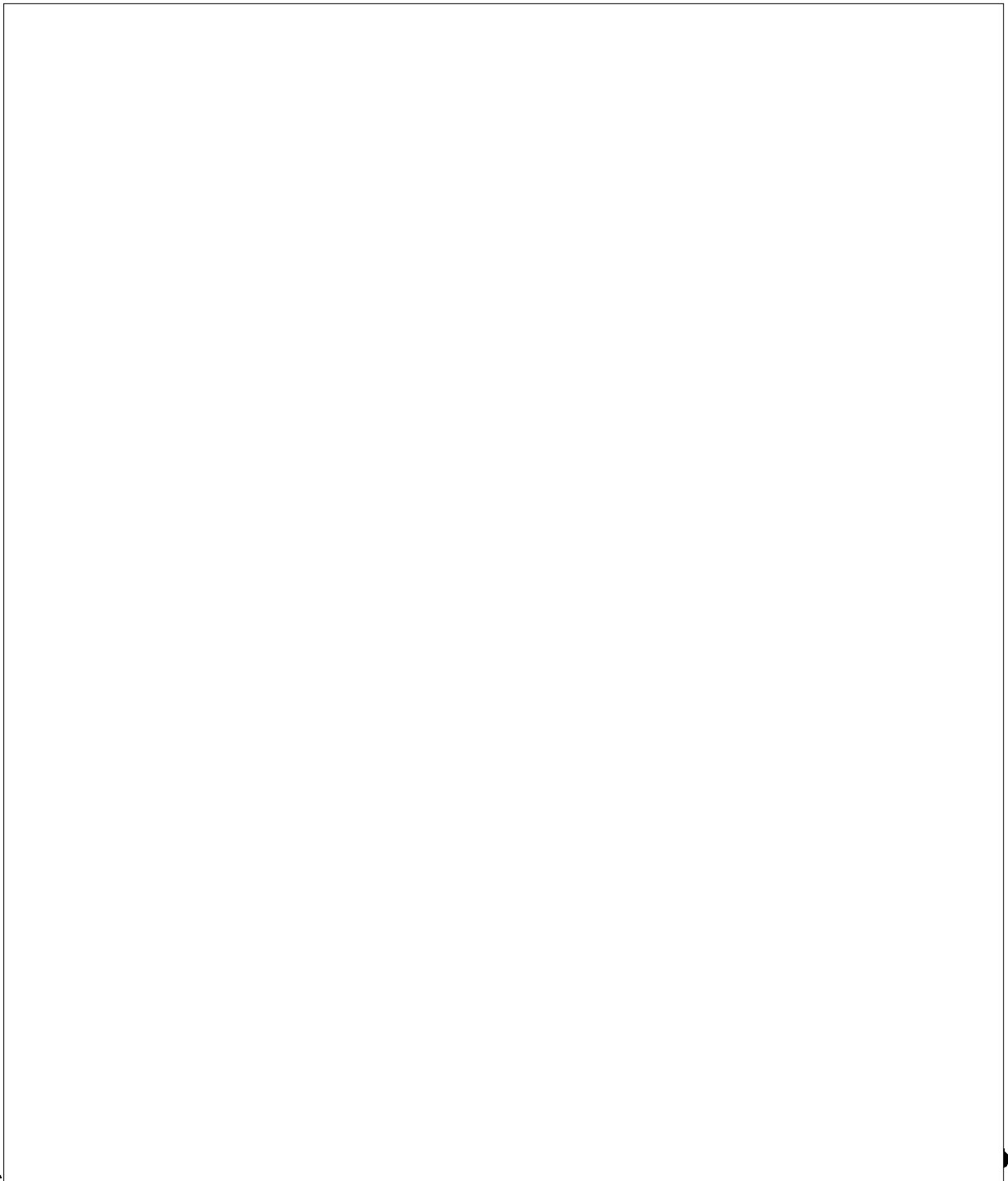
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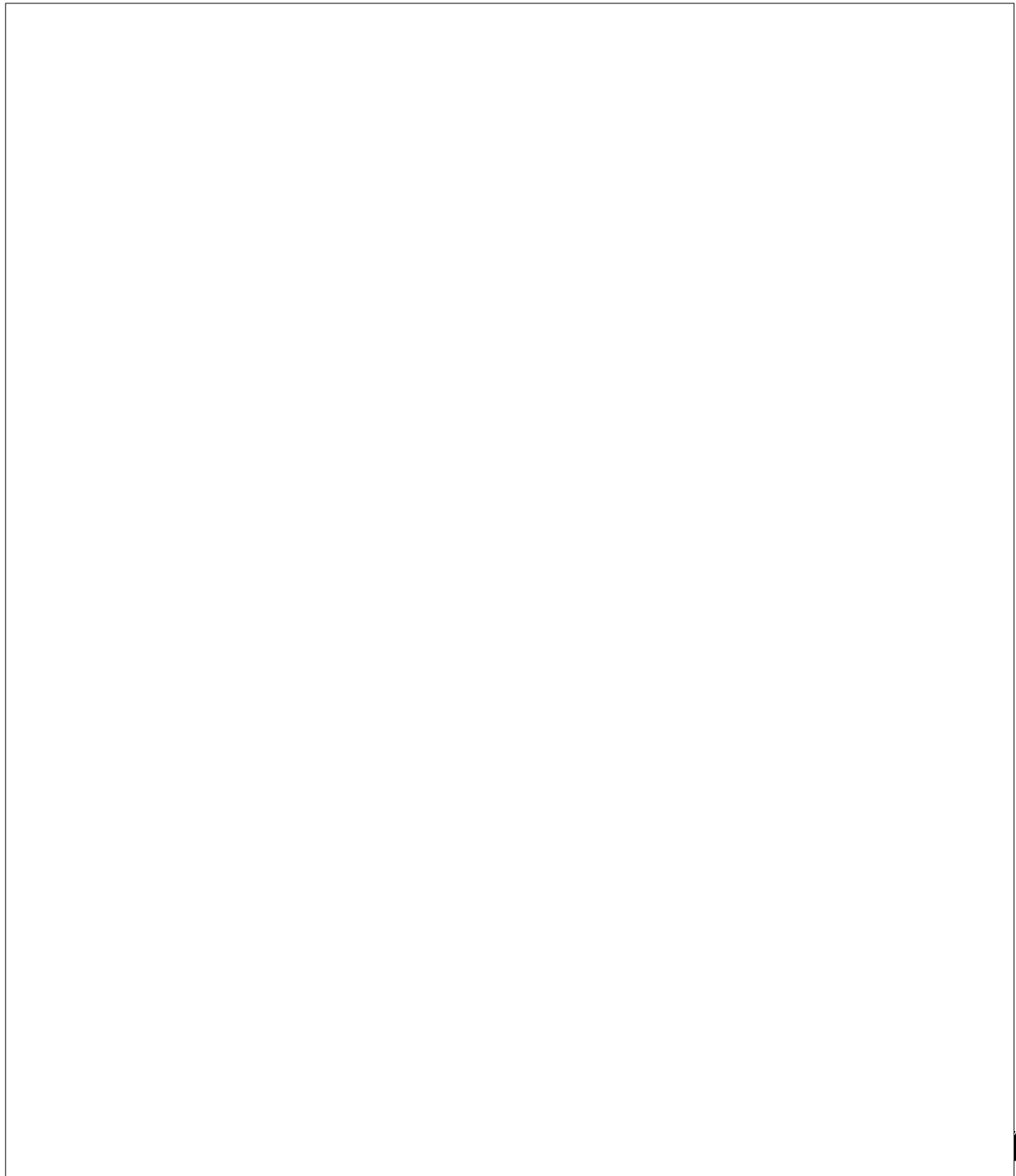
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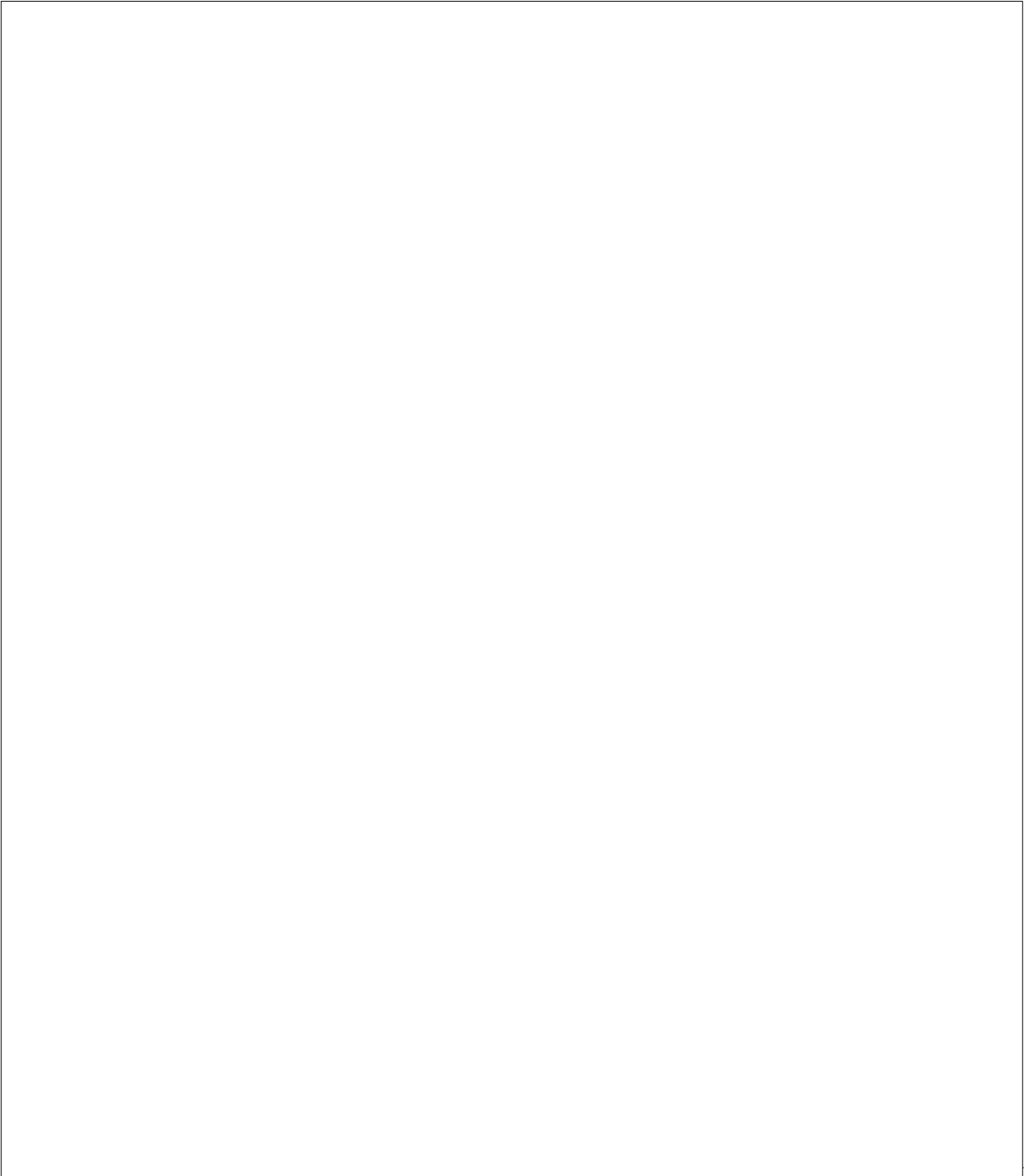
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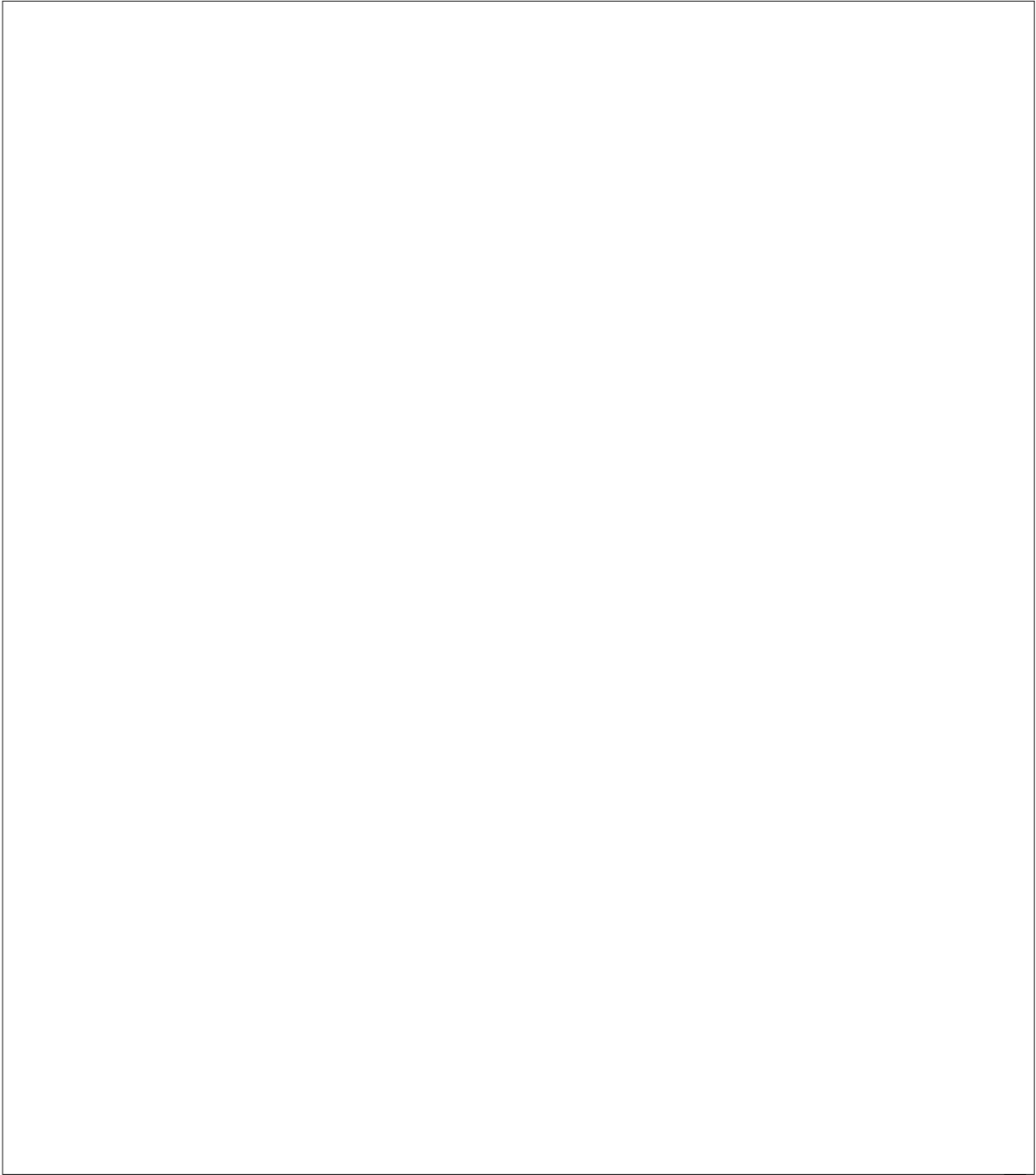
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